

AROUND SELMA.

Wonderful and Rapid Development.

VINEYARD AND FRUIT PROFITS.

Climate and Soil of this Section—The Lands and the Water Supply—Data of Fruit Yields—An Attractive Location.

At no other time in the history of our State has there been such a general demand for information regarding the capabilities of California soil, the price of lands, and general resources than now. Never before has there been such a steady stream of home-seekers coming to us from the worn-out soils of the East and South; from the oft-divided homesteads of the prairies; from the thickly-populated areas of the Middle States, and from the great crowded cities of the Atlantic slope.

Constantly realizing, therefore, the demand for such information, the RECORD-UNION, with a view to aiding home-seekers and to answer these inquiries, continues its long-established custom of furnishing somewhat detailed accounts of different localities, gathered by its own representatives especially engaged in this work, and which we trust will materially assist in securing for themselves, either in person or by correspondence.

To chronicle in detail the laying out, the growth, the advantages and resources of the subject of this article would, to do the subject justice, require space enough to fill an ordinary-sized pamphlet volume. Suffice it to say that Selma is unique. Fresno county is the only one of the Southern Pacific Railroad, 221 miles south of San Francisco and 15 miles south of the city of Fresno.

SURFACE AND SLOPE.

The surface of the country is comparatively level, with a gentle slope to the southwest, the grade being about eight feet to the mile, and affording most excellent drainage facilities. The soil is sandy and exceedingly fertile, especially adapted to the successful culture of fruit and vines, and is, in fact, the very center of what is surely destined to be the greatest raisin-producing region of the globe.

WINTER AND SUMMER.

The climate is Californian, and numbers but two seasons, the rainy and the dry, technically termed winter and summer. Winter is represented by the rain which falls in the first rain to have ended with the last.

The first precipitation usually occurs in October, followed by occasional rains in storms of from one to three days duration. Showers continue to fall into March and sometimes during April and May, but the vast majority of the "winter" rains are early and pleasant, and absolutely free from frost.

The summers are hot and dry, and are just what puts this section in the front rank as a raisin-producing country. The heat of the day is invariably followed by cool nights, which insure good rest. Owing to the excessive dryness of the atmosphere, and consequent lack of evaporation, less than one-tenth of heat is noticed here when the thermometer reaches as high even as 110°, than would be experienced in a moist atmosphere at a temperature of 80°. The average mean temperature of the coldest winter month will vary less than twenty degrees from that of the hottest summer month.

PRODUCTS OF THE SOIL.

Recent Changes from Old to Newer Methods of Cultivation.

The acknowledged superiority of California in the growing of all kinds of deciduous and semi-tropic productions, the immense extent of country dependent upon us for these products, make any development in fruit-growing, or any region which affords superior opportunities for such development, a matter of public concern and interest.

Agriculture is rapidly undergoing a change, and vineyards and orchards are replacing the wheatfields and pastures. These changes are so great and rapid as to amount to a revolution. Everywhere in the great valleys and on the foothills bordering them, fruit trees and vines are being planted the areas of the old cultivation nearly gone in no section has the revolution been more sudden and complete than at this point.

The time was, and but a short time since, when this section was known and contemptuously designated as "the sand plains." Here were annuals soon vast fields of wheat which, with the advantages of irrigation, yielded, according to the rainfall of the season, from nothing to thirty bushels to the acre, and rendered farming an occupation that was at best the vaguest kind of uncertainty.

ADVANTAGES OF IRRIGATION.

But note the change. The season of 1888 marked the period when the irrigationist was assured the right and protection in the use of water, and immediately attention turned to the fruit industry, experimental tests showing how the vine and the fruit could be irrigated.

Small tracts with water rights were immediately sought after and in great demand, and as evidence of what may be accomplished by well directed investment of a small amount of capital, backed by energy and push, we present figures showing the returns received by different individuals from various crops.

RAISERS.

P. Allen, one-half mile west of Selma, has one-fourth acre in blackberries. The vines are planted in rows ten feet apart with hills in each row every five feet. They are of the Kittimany and Lawton varieties, and the plants cost ten dollars. The first year they did not bear, but the second year the yield amounted to 250 pounds, at 4 cents per pound, and the third year, to 3,000 pounds, at 3 cents per pound. The net receipts amounted to over \$75, or at the rate of over \$300 per acre.

Mr. Allen also marketed from a peach orchard of six acres, \$75 worth of dried fruit the past season. The trees are early and late Crawford and Salvay.

RAISIN GRAPES.

M. Lewis, three and a half miles east of Selma, has six acres in raisin grapes, planted eight feet apart, or 680 vines to the acre. The expense of pruning amounted to \$24; cultivation, \$9; water, \$4; 50¢ picking and turning, \$40. He sold the crop for \$75, or a net profit of \$116.20 per acre. Vines come in bearing in two years, when the yield is just about sufficient to cover all expenses of culture up to that time. In starting a vineyard, the cost of the vines, plowing and leveling the ground, irrigation and cultivation of the vines for one year amounts to \$13 per acre.

The fourth year the vines come into full bearing, and produce an average yield of six tons to the acre.

METHODS OF CURING.

The grapes are picked and sun-dried on trays in the field. When sufficiently cured they are gathered in what are called "sweat-boxes," holding from thirty to fifty pounds each, and in this condition marketed to the packing houses at a price ranging from three and a half to four cents per pound. The price of green grapes will average between 500 and 600 pounds in the "sweat-box" or about 3,000 pounds to the acre. These averages are made up from actual successive harvests, and pre-

sent a minimum rather than the average, and are positively within bounds. It is a fact that whole rows of vines often produce from 80 to 150 pounds each, and it is a poor vine that won't yield 40 pounds. Now, allowing but 600 bearing vines to the acre, and we have seven and one-half acres, we get 2,520 pounds per acre, or 20 per cent. interest on an investment in land at \$450 per acre. The net yield from the eighty-acre field of Professor Braly, ex-President of the Bank of Fresno, amounted in one season to over \$18,000. The average was twelve tons of green grapes per acre, and the price received was four and one-half cents per ton in the "sweat-box."

PEACHES AND APRICOTS.

T. B. Mathews, whose property lies one-half mile east of town, furnishes the following data: He has fine and varianed an assortment of deciduous fruit trees as one could wish to see. His peach trees are now seven years old. They are of the Crawford and Salvay varieties, and bore a crop the third year, and are now bearing the second crop. They are planted 150 to the acre, and last year averaged 250 pounds of fruit to the tree, which he sold at a net profit of a cent per pound or \$400 per acre. Sixty-nine Crawford trees five years old yielded 400 pounds each. His Bartlett pear trees, six years old, averaged 75 pounds per tree, and bore a net profit of three cents per tree.

THE ARID REGION.

Greely's Statement of Rainfall Beyond the Mississippi.

General A. W. Greely, Chief Signal Officer, gave to the Washington Philosophical Society, at its regular meeting, February 13th, the partial results of a study he has been making of rainfall in the trans-Mississippi region. He had before him a number of maps upon which he had charted the observations which were the basis of his study, and referred to them constantly as he spoke. He said that the idea that there is any part of the West that is absolutely rainless is now a幻影 (a mirage). The line of rainfall has been doubled, so that there are, in twelve States and Territories, nearly one hundred stations; and the observations, if reduced to a single one, would cover a period of nearly five thousand years. The result of charting these observations has been to reveal the great variety of small rainfall. The amount which the annual precipitation was supposed to be, less than five inches has almost disappeared, and that in which the rainfall was put down at less than fifteen inches has been reduced by a quarter of a million of square miles since the census map of 1880 was made.

Mr. Sides has 400 apricot trees which are planted of apple trees, including Winesaps, Bellflowers, Northern Spy, which, by the way, ripens for late summer and early fall use. For winter use the Ben Davis and Kentucky Red Streak have proved excellent, and are now bearing well.

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ROSE MARKS.

The old house was slowly dropping to pieces about the young people. Yet for all that they were as happy as though it were a palace building up about them. In truth, it should have been enough to content any of us simply to be Rose Marks—the rose no rosier, the lily no snowier, sun-shine not more golden than her hair, more dazzling than her smile; a lovely little soul and body, enjoying every moment of life, and making it precious to everyone within her influence. She never thought of grubbing that the house was shaky and the food scanty, but contented herself with bread when there were no dainties, and when the roof leaked, moved her bed to another room where it did not leak so badly. Every timber in the old house was dear to her, and she never asked for a better. She was a good old soul, Rose Marks, in general, and her cousin, Rose, loved her in especial; not her cousin, that is, if you demand a literal fact, but her stepmother's nephew, yet always called a cousin and always loved like a brother. A brother? Well, no, not exactly. People are not very apt to think whether or not their brothers will like their ribbons or their father's bushy damask if their brothers catch them gazing at themselves intently, to point at an inattention from their brothers, or to have their hearts beat like wildfire at a touch of the brother's hand. These two children were all alone in the house now, for the rest of the family had followed the older children, who had died of the great typhus epidemic raged some ten years ago. So Rose kept the old house as she could, and Roger paid her a regular board from his little salary as clerk of the only store in the village. How many times Rose resolved to go out by the day and do sewing since she had been sixteen, "I can't afford to go out," said Roger, she would say, as she was mapping it out to Roger in the evening, at the other side of the table where he was studying. "And what would become of me?" Roger said.

"But, Roger," Rose said, growing red and redder, "some day, you know, you will be married, and then you won't want me around."

"I don't!"

"Your wife won't, at any rate; for you know I'm not even your sister, and your wife when you marry—"

"Can't you wait till I do?" thundered Roger, getting up and slacking out of the chair.

"You won't forget how to sew, will you?"

And Rose began to cry, and Roger strode all around the place till he became like an unhappy ghost. "How marry! Why was she harping on that string? Did she want to marry herself and have him first put out of the way? And then he would bring his wife, his old mother, and chucked and chucked him, and asked himself why he was, of all men, so placed that nothing could ever awoke him, so help reach him, no one to help a hand to lift him up—just suffered to plot along from hand to mouth, when the world would put him in such a hand. If he had been born in such a place, he would have, with the open a second store here. Two thousand dollars—he might just as well wish for a silver mine. Just as he said the words to himself, a soft, clear, radiant hue was welling up over the dusky garden, and as he raised his head again, after a while, there came the moon floating in the sky, and the stars in the interval below. It cheered him inexplicably, like an omen, a promise. He stood up and struck one palm into another. "She will have her," he cried, and went to his dreams.

"Can you think of anything, Rose, where we can economize?" said he next day.

"Economize?" she repeated gaily. "For what? In what? With what?"

"So that we can raise \$2,000," he answered gravely.

She sat down as suddenly as if some gigantic hand had been laid on her head and had crushed her into the seat.

"Two thousand dollars?" she gasped.

"We couldn't economize it in 2,000 years, for I don't know where we waste a cent now."

"I must get it in some way, then, if I have to go out sawing wood after hours."

"Why, Roger?"

"For capital to get into business."

"A house would sell for \$500 more than you want."

"The house?" he said; "that is not mine."

Rose stood up, moving one thing and another nervously about the table; her lips trembled, and all at once she ran out of the room. "Oh, he cares nothing for me; he despises me; he regards me; he would take nothing from me." Because it is mine, it is not his, and he wants nothing.

"She takes no interest in it; she doesn't care a whit whether I go into business or not; it matters nothing to her," he sighed.

Late in the day a long, slow, dark, lumbering old ox, with a load of logs, trudged along the roadside, and as the sun was low the sky was purple and all the land was in shadow, and low thunders began to growl in its breast, and sharp lightnings leap from it. It seemed to Roger only something in accord with his feelings, for it was fitted to nature to be as dark as his own outlook.

It was a terrible storm, though, before another hour passed. As the storm increased, Roger remembered Rose's fear of thunder and plunged out into it, determined that she should not be alone in such a moment of absolute terror. The rain met him half way, worse than any lightning—a gray, stifling downpour, in which it was impossible to draw his breath, and his only refuge was to fast to his horse and run as fast as was any athlete can run a race.

She must have seen him coming, for she set open the door, though she stood behind it. "What made you leave shelter in such a storm as this?" she said; and when the lightning was an overwhelming flash, the fire of which seemed to penetrate her brain. She clapped her hands to her face with a shriek, the house rocked, and the door swung and slammed, and she fell fainting to the floor.

When Rose came to herself, she was lying on the floor, where the door had fallen behind her; the storm was a driving rain, below the horizon, with now and then a smothered growl, and the rain was patterning in thin showers, which the freshened breeze shrank from waves and boughs. She sat up directly; and presently, as soon as she found her feet, went to the window to look about. They were both silent; and just then good old Mrs. Vance came up

the garden walk from her own adjoining one, fearing Rose was alone, and not having dared to come before; and she stayed to tea, and wanted a game of cribbage in the evening; and when Roger came back from escort duty to old Mrs. Vance, Rose just lifted the old dame between her face and his, and saying good-night hurriedly, was away to her chambers.

Roger went to his room. Sleep he could not. He stepped out on the old broken balcony of his window and watched the wheeling of the constellations and heard the tiny crackling sounds of the dead wind, the sound of a night bird, maybe, tapping the bough, or else the dead vine branch beating on a window-pane, and he thought how hard and bitter a thing was life, and half cursed it; and then the vision of Ross would stand before him—the sweet, smiling face, the dimpled velvet cheek, the shining eye, the gentle motion—and he said to himself that it was enough for any one to live in the same world with such a being.

At length it occurred to him that this was enough of star-gazing. If he were ever to be a man, fit to win her, even if it were impossible, he must cease his daydreams and work; and to work, he must sleep, and rest; and to his bed, and all night long, he staggered back. What strange odor was this? What strange atmosphere after the cool night fragrance? The room was full of a thick, pungent cloud—it was the smoke of burning. "Fire! fire!" he shouted, and sprang through the door, and the smoldering spark had been making headway in the lonely upper rooms all the delicious summer evening, all the time that he had been leaning on the balcony drinking the palmy air, all the time that Ross had been folded in her sweet slumber, as it was dripping from the leaves upon the walls. Another moment and over its dull roar came a cry. "Oh! Roger! Roger! Oh, my dearest! my dearest! where are you? Do you know it?" And Rose, with a cloak thrown over her old dress, was prodding us; it had lit up the way to each other. Without it we should still have been groping in the dark. I should never have dared to win you; you would never have known I loved you!"

"You are coming right home with me, children," said Mrs. Vance, till we are safe and sound. "Come and see what is to be done. Is the house insured?" Where's your paper?"

"They are gone," said Rose, "with everything else."

"They are utterly penniless."

It was just a fortnight after that when Roger entered. Mrs. Vance's house one night, Rose ran and clapped a bit of her hair over her eyes, and then she said, "I don't know what to say; there was no use, and the blaze in the house of their childhood and youth was ascending like a smoke of sacrifice. Rose stood folded in the arms of Roger, hiding her eyes from the dreadful sight, as a child might stand beside the grave of a mother as it is being filled. "Let it go, without tears—let it go!" Roger responded. The Federal troops, which proved to have been a single regiment on a scout, had retired beyond the Gap, and our own force had followed in the direction of its former position.

We learned presently that the Federals were advancing by Cumberland Gap, where we had about a regiment of cavalry and a battery of light artillery. It was a spendid day; the ground was covered with a fresh fall of snow that glistened in the sun, and melted away here and there, showing the dark, moist, clinging brown earth. The sky was a soft pale blue overhead; and the crisp little wind that blew in our faces had lost the biting edge it had at dawn. Our spirits rose, as we fell into the familiar regular swinging step, and there was no straggling.

We had tramped steadily forward for some time, and all the while a sharp firing of small-arms-shots, and now and then a sharp crack of battery. It seemed to be a short fight without the usual skirmishing, and we were put at once on a double-quick. But much to our disappointment when we came to the bit of open country where the firing had seemed so brisk, save some time, when the rebels had been driven back, and the smoke of battle still hung over the ground, we found the smoke of a battery had been struck by lightning in the storm, and the smoldering spark had been making headway in the lonely upper rooms all the delicious summer evening, all the time that he had been leaning on the balcony drinking the palmy air, all the time that Ross had been folded in her sweet slumber, as it was dripping from the leaves upon the walls. Another moment and over its dull roar came a cry. "Oh! Roger! Roger! Oh, my dearest! my dearest! where are you? Do you know it?" And Rose, with a cloak thrown over her old dress, was prodding us; it had lit up the way to each other. Without it we should still have been groping in the dark. I should never have dared to win you; you would never have known I loved you!"

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We learned presently that the Federals were advancing by Cumberland Gap, where we had about a regiment of cavalry and a battery of light artillery. It was a spendid day; the ground was covered with a fresh fall of snow that glistened in the sun, and melted away here and there, showing the dark, moist, clinging brown earth. The sky was a soft pale blue overhead; and the crisp little wind that blew in our faces had lost the biting edge it had at dawn. Our spirits rose, as we fell into the familiar regular swinging step, and there was no straggling.

We had tramped steadily forward for some time, and all the while a sharp firing of small-arms-shots, and now and then a sharp crack of battery. It seemed to be a short fight without the usual skirmishing, and we were put at once on a double-quick. But much to our disappointment when we came to the bit of open country where the firing had seemed so brisk, save some time, when the rebels had been driven back, and the smoke of battle still hung over the ground, we found the smoke of a battery had been struck by lightning in the storm, and the smoldering spark had been making headway in the lonely upper rooms all the delicious summer evening, all the time that he had been leaning on the balcony drinking the palmy air, all the time that Ross had been folded in her sweet slumber, as it was dripping from the leaves upon the walls. Another moment and over its dull roar came a cry. "Oh! Roger! Roger! Oh, my dearest! my dearest! where are you? Do you know it?" And Rose, with a cloak thrown over her old dress, was prodding us; it had lit up the way to each other. Without it we should still have been groping in the dark. I should never have dared to win you; you would never have known I loved you!"

"You are coming right home with me, children," said Mrs. Vance, till we are safe and sound. "Come and see what is to be done. Is the house insured?" Where's your paper?"

"They are gone," said Rose, "with everything else."

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